

REMARKS

This is in response to the Final Office Action dated March 6, 2006, on which the shortened period for response expires on June 6, 2006. Accordingly, this response is timely filed.

Summary of Office Action

Applicant's claims 1-3, 5-9 and 11-12 are currently pending in the above-identified patent application. Claim 13 has been cancelled by the present Amendment as it was previously withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as his invention. Claims 1-3 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,900,568 (hereinafter "LeBlanc"). Claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over LeBlanc in view of U.S. Patent 6,375,357 (hereinafter "Miura").

Applicant's Reply to Rejection of the Claims

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, because the Examiner found the limitation "wherein said shield is secured to an end surface of said bearing sleeve having a recessed portion between ... (continued)" of Claims 1 and 7 to be unclear. Applicant amended Claims 1 and 7 to more particularly claim that the recessed portion is formed on the bearing sleeve and not on the shield.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a)

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 1 and 7 and dependent Claims 2-3 and 8-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by LeBlanc. The Examiner also rejected dependent Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over LeBlanc in view of Miura. Applicant has proposed amending the claims, as reflected under the heading Listing of Claims beginning on page 2 of this paper, to better distinguish the claimed invention.

In addition, Applicant submits the following remarks wherein the Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

In rejecting Applicant's independent Claims 1 and 7, the Examiner asserts that all of the elements provided in these independent claims are shown in LeBlanc. *Final Office Action, Pages 3-4*. However, Applicant respectfully submits that LeBlanc fails to show at least the limitation of the recessed portion being located within an inner shielded space defined by the shield, an end surface of the bearing sleeve and an outer surface of the shaft, as provided in Applicant's amended independent Claims 1 and 7.

As shown in Figure 2 of LeBlanc, the recessed portion identified by the Examiner on page 3 of the Final Office Action is located outside the inner shielded space defined by the seal wall 218, shield 222 and shaft 202.

Moreover, by providing a recessed portion within the "inner shielded space" as in Applicant's claimed invention, the inner cylindrical surface of the bearing sleeve forms a wall between the recessed portion and the bearing gap thus precluding lubricating oil from making contact with the shield. This limitation is clearly not taught in LeBlanc. Unlike Applicant's claimed invention, the seal wall 218 in LeBlanc does not act as a wall protecting the shield from exposure to the lubricating oil.

Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-9, 11-12 depend, respectively, from independent Claims 1 and 7 and, therefore, necessarily include all of their limitations. The deficiency in LeBlanc, as discussed above with respect to amended independent Claims 1 and 7, applies with equal force to the rejection of these dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 103(a). Accordingly, Claims 2, 3, 8, and 9 are patentable over LeBlanc, and Claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 are patentable over LeBlanc in view of Miura.

Conclusion

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention as defined by amended independent Claims 1 and 7, and Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-9, 11-12 which depend therefrom, respectively, are patentable over the cited references.

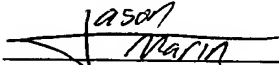
For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that this patent application, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned counsel at the number noted below if it will advance the prosecution of this application, or with any suggestion to resolve any condition that would impede allowance. In the event that any extension of time is required, Applicant petitions for that extension of time required to make this response timely. Kindly charge any additional fee, or credit any surplus, to Deposit Account No. 50-0675, Order No. 057517-9.

Respectfully submitted,

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New York, New York



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